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## **LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA, RECEIVES GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD**

**NEW ORLEANS (June 6, 2006) – Richard Moe**, president of the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**, and **Doug Loescher**, director of the **National Trust Main Street Center®**, today presented Lynchburg, Virginia, a **2006 Great American Main Street Award** for its successful efforts in revitalizing its historic commercial district through historic preservation. The award was presented during the 2006 National Main Streets Conference in New Orleans.

“The hallmark of a truly great community is its resilience,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “Lynchburg has overcome many obstacles in its quest to reclaim its historic buildings and recruit new businesses -- and because of these efforts, the community is thriving.”

Lynchburg is located at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains on the banks of the James River. Since the 1950s, the town’s commercial district faced both economic and natural challenges including competition from a regional mall and a 1985 flood that ravaged its historic buildings. While many had given up on the town, Lynchburg’s merchants and city leaders did not. In 1996, two early revitalization organizations, Central Lynchburg and Lynch’s Ferry Authority, merged to form Lynch’s Landing, designated a Virginia Main Street community in 2000.

Lynch’s Landing has strategically leveraged both public and private funding to support its revitalization efforts. Annually, the organization raises \$200,000 in media support and \$200,000 by managing a parking deck. The City of Lynchburg’s downtown capitol funding of \$1 million has been renewed annually, and since 2001, Lynchburg has spent \$670,000 in CDBG funds to improve its buildings and install new signage.

The broad support for Lynch’s Landing, Lynchburg’s Main Street program, is evident in the 1,500 volunteers who turn out annually and have donated more than 45,000 service hours since 2001. The Main Street program partners include 107 corporations and organizations that reflect the community’s diversity. Together with downtown merchants, these organizations cooperatively market the district, host 32 special events and manage a successful image development campaign to change public perceptions regarding Lynchburg’s safety and lack of parking. Since 2001, 446,100 event attendees have spent \$21,858,900 in Lynchburg.

Lynch’s Landing works with the City and the Small Business Development Center to recruit new businesses and offers business development workshops in marketing, planning and merchandising. In 2005, Lynchburg saw 13 new businesses locate downtown; the last six years have seen a net increase of 356 jobs and 37 businesses.

Lynchburg actively works to preserve its architecture and improve the appearance of its historic commercial district. Its façade improvement grant program uses funds that generated more than \$1million in private investment to provide buildings with historically-appropriate facelifts. Property owners receive architectural design assistance from local architects who work with Lynchburg’s preservation partners and the Virginia Main Street program to ensure quality historic preservation and compatible design of new and infill construction projects, such as the federal courthouse. When it outgrew its building, the courthouse opted to remain downtown, purchase and rehab a historic building, and build a compatibly designed addition.

Lynchburg's Main Street Program promoted real estate development opportunities by hosting open houses and listing available properties online, where potential investors can use a real-time benefits calculator to determine the cost of a project after applying tax credits, grants, and other financial incentives. As a result of marketing efforts, 57 of Lynchburg's historic commercial buildings have been rehabbed. Notable projects in Lynchburg include the \$6.8 million transformation of an abandoned industrial building into Amazeement Square, a multi-disciplinary children's museum that brings more than 90,000 visitors downtown annually, and the adaptive reuse of Lynchburg's historic train depot as a restaurant and office space. The district's real estate tax base has tripled in six years. To encourage a vibrant downtown 24/7, Lynchburg promoted the creation of downtown housing, which includes the mixed-use Riverviews Artspace project with 36 loft apartments and the adaptive reuse of office space into housing. To date, Lynchburg's historic commercial district has 392 housing units and only two percent downtown housing vacancy.

With a total public investment of \$36 million and a \$33 million in private investment over six years, the revitalization of Lynchburg's historic commercial district shows no signs of stopping. Recently-completed projects include the construction of the new Warehouse Theatre and Arts and Education Building. The renovation of the historic Academy of Music Theater is underway. When completed, this multi-building development will create an entire city-block of venues and businesses devoted to the arts.

For more information about Lynchburg's award-winning historic commercial district and revitalization efforts, contact Lynch's Landing at (434) 528-3950, [terri.proffitt@lynchburgva.gov](mailto:terri.proffitt@lynchburgva.gov), or visit them online at [www.downtownlynchburg.com](http://www.downtownlynchburg.com). For more information about the National Trust's Main Street Awards program and the other 2006 GAMSAs winners, visit [www.mainstreet.org/awards](http://www.mainstreet.org/awards) or contact [mainstreet\\_awards@nthp.org](mailto:mainstreet_awards@nthp.org) or (202) 588-6129.

Established in 1980, the **National Trust Main Street Center**® helps communities of all sizes revitalize their traditional historic commercial districts. The Main Street Center has been the leader of the preservation-based community revitalization movement and has proven historic preservation and community-driven economic development affects lasting change. Active in more than 1,900 downtowns and neighborhood business districts, the Main Street program has generated more than \$31.4 billion in new investment. Participating communities have created 331,417 net new jobs, 72,387 net new businesses, and rehabilitated more than 178,000 buildings, leveraging an average of \$28.31 in new investment for every dollar spent on Main Street initiatives.

The **National Trust for Historic Preservation** is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 28 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust's web site at [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).

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*History is in Our Hands*

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